

**MBNMS Research Activity Panel
Meeting Summary**

Host: Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary
Location: Elkhorn Slough Reserve
Date: Friday, September 9th, 2005; 9 am to 12 pm

Members Present:

Last	First	Institution
Carr	Mark	UC Santa Cruz
DeVogelaere	Andrew	Monterey Bay NMS
Harrold	Chris	Monterey Bay Aquarium
King	Aaron	Institute for MPA Science
Micheli	Fiorenza	Hopkins Marine Station
Moore	Steve	California State University, Monterey Bay
Paull	Charles	Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute
Pomeroy	Caroline	University of California, Santa Cruz
Sharp	Gary	Center for Climate/Ocean Resources Study
Storlazzi	Curt	United States Geological Survey
Tokmakian	Robin	Naval Postgraduate School
Wasson	Kerstin	Elkhorn Slough NERR
Yoklavich	Mary	NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service

Guests: Steve Lonhart (MBNMS); Jan Rolletto (GFNMS); Sean VanSommeran (PSRF); Scott Lucas (CDFG, PSRF).

Notes:

CONSENT ITEMS

9:00 - 9:10 Introductions/modifications to the agenda (Chris Harrold)

UPDATES

09:10 – 09:25 Update on the draft MBNMS Action Plan on bottom trawling (Andrew DeVogelaere)

- The MBNMS *Draft Action Plan on Bottom Trawling Effects on Benthic Habitats* was reviewed
- MBNMS has developed a partnership with the National Center for Coastal Ocean Sciences and the Pflieger Institute of Environmental Research to study recovery processes related to trawling impacts
- RAP commented on: the history of the seafloor microtopography, which might be lost and recover in the hundred year scale, must be considered in the study; some trawling impact references were shared; the USGS is developing a model to describe how often the seafloor is naturally disturbed by big wave events, and this would provide good context for the study.

09:25 - 09:40 RAP comment on agriculture discharge into marine waters (Chris Harrold)

- Staff thanked the RAP for their involvement in commenting on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and shared a copy of the final MBNMS staff comment letter to the Bureau of Reclamation
- Decision: New RAP policy- A consensus from the RAP is now defined as: greater than 50% of the members have responded to a request or comment from the RAP Chair, and all of those responses were in agreement
- Action: The RAP would like to be briefed on the final decision regarding how the agricultural disposal will proceed

DISCUSSION ITEMS

09:40 – 10:40 Sanctuary research permit issues (Chris Harrold)

- RAP members shared their concerns related to MBNMS research permits. This list of comments will be shared with MBNMS staff. A response to this list, along with a briefing on the MBNMS permit process, will be presented by Holly Price, Resource Protection Coordinator at the MBNMS, at the next RAP meeting.

Clarification is needed on:

- When a research permit is required
- A definition of what constitutes a seafloor disturbance (e.g., is a temporary PVC pipe in the mud considered seafloor disturbance; what about a coffee can core for sand crabs)
- What information needs to be submitted to receive a permit
- Where are the physical boundaries of the sanctuary within which a permit is required (e.g., what tidal heights and where in the Elkhorn Slough)
- Necessity for class field trips to obtain research permits
- Is it possible to have a collaborative research permit process between CDFG and MBNMS
- Is basic research as valued to the sanctuary as applied research? Is this weighed in the research permit approval process?

A helpful permit web site might include:

- Status of permit applications in progress
- A checklist that a researcher could go through to help them determine if they need a permit
- An interactive GIS map that shows where permitted research projects are located

How the RAP might help:

- RAP members should explain to their constituents that the research permit process is designed to prevent potential negative, cumulative impacts on sanctuary resources.
- RAP members could participate in outreach activities, listed below
- RAP members could work with sanctuary staff to develop the most efficient permit process
- The RAP could advise on the impacts of research projects, individually with the permit coordinator or as a group when there is a large-scale project
- A priority of the RAP should be to work with sanctuary staff and colleague scientists to facilitate research in the sanctuary, which is part of the sanctuary mandate

Outreach:

- There needs to be an outreach effort to scientists so that they know that research permits are required for certain activities in the sanctuary
- The permit process will be more successful if the resource protection and research benefits of permits are known (e.g., awareness of research could facilitate collaborations)
- There needs to be information on the consequences of not having a research permit
- Enforcement is one way to educate people that they need research permits (e.g., CDFG wardens and research permits)
- A “road show” on the topic to major research institution seminar series would be useful
- Researchers need to know that while the regulations require a staff response in 45 days, the actual turn-around time is usually much shorter
- Some scientists in the region have the perception that the sanctuary makes research difficult

Other comments:

- There needs to be a discussion on how to modify a permit efficiently as experimental methods evolve in the field, after the initial permit
- The research permit process should be less complex for low impact studies
- Research permits may be discouraging important research from happening in the sanctuary (e.g., borehole studies and the MARS cable) because funding agencies don’t want to cover permit costs, and funded projects may be prohibited
- Research permits may be an effective way of tracking what research is underway within the MBNMS- including monitoring projects for SIMoN
- A list of pending research permits could be attached to the RAP agenda, to be “pulled” if one was of interest
- Staff may not have the expertise to determine if an impact is significant, there should be an appeal process. Perhaps the RAP could be involved in commenting on controversial permits
- MBARI internal proposals are viewed more favorably if they focus on areas outside the sanctuary

BREAK

11:00 – 11:45 RAP membership discussion (Chris Harrold)

- The following modifications were suggested for the RAP policies and protocols: consider eliminating word “conservation” from first bullet; change membership description to... “Membership will contain a group of disciplines relevant to the sanctuary, such as...”
- Chris and Andrew will determine later how to handle the amendments (i.e., do these minor changes have to be brought before the SAC for approval).

SUGGESTED FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

11:45 – 12:00

- Presentation by MBNMS Resource Protection staff on the research permit policies and procedures

ANNUAL RAP BARBECUE

12:00 – 13:00

Past, Current, and Future Agenda Items:

- Status of research permits in the sanctuary
- Update on Sanctuary Currents
- Update from John Stephens, Adjunct Professor at Cal Poly, on his southern MBNMS (Cambria) studies
- Impacts of Benthic Trawling: Needs of the MBNMS
- ~~• Status of the Ocean Observatory system~~
- ~~• Implementation of the new RAP Purpose and Protocols~~
- ~~• Marine reserves and MLPA update.~~